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THE

WISHING-CAP.

BY MRS. SHERWOOD,

AUTHOR OF "LITTLE HENRY AND HIS BEARER,"

&c. &c.

NEW EDITION.

LONDON:

HOULSTON AND STONEMAN,

65, PATERNOSTER ROW.

THE

WISHING-CAP.

THERE lived once a lady in London, who had a great deal of money, but who had never given her heart to God. This lady had the care of five children: four of them were brothers and sisters; and their names were James and Edward, Charlotte and Louisa. The fifth child was an orphan, and had no brothers or sisters. The name of this little boy was Charles. Little Charles's papa and mamma had been dead only a very few months: they were very pious people, and had

brought up their little boy in the fear of God. Charles thought of his papa and mamma every day: he knew they were gone to heaven, and he knew, also, who that blessed person was, for whose sake they had been received into that happy place.

Every day little Charles read a few

chapters in a Bible which his papa had given him, and he tried to remember the good things which had been taught him: so God blessed little Charles, and helped him to be good.

It happened, one Sunday afternoon, in the Christmas holidays, that the lady came into the children's play-room, and sat down among them. "I am come," she said, "to drink tea with you this evening; after which we will put on a wishing-cap; and then we shall see what fine things the wishing-cap will produce."

The children were all pleased to see the lady sit down among them;

and while they were drinking their tea, they talked a great deal about the wishing-cap.

"What can a wishing-cap be?" said Louisa, who was the youngest: "and how can it bring fine things?"

"I never heard of a wishing-cap in all my life," said James. "I want tea to be over, that we may see it."

"O!" said Charlotte, "I know what is meant by a wishing-cap. I remember reading of a man, in a fairy tale, who had a wishing-cap; and when he put this cap on, and wished for any thing, he had it immediately: but I thought there were no such

things really as wishing-caps, except in fairy tales."

"Well, well," said the lady, "we shall see what kind of wishing-cap I can make: but I must tell you, my wishing-cap is not so good a one as the man's in the fairy tale; it will only produce such things as may be easily had, it will not bring wonders to pass."

In this manner they went on talking till tea was over, and the tea-things carried away. Then the lady drew her chair to the fire, and bidding the children sit round her, she put her hand into her pocket, and pulled out a sheet of white paper. She

then folded up the paper in the shape of a cap, and holding it up in her hand, "This is the wishing-cap," she said; "you shall put it on, and try what it is good for. Come, who will be the first to wear the cap?" Then the lady placed the cap on Charlotte's head. "Now," she said, "think! what do you wish for?"

"But will what I wish for really come?" said Charlotte.

"Perhaps it may," answered the lady: "we shall know to-morrow morning."

"Then," said Charlotte, "I wish for a muslin frock, trimmed with satin ribbon."

"Very well," said the lady. "Who comes next?"

"I! I!" cried James, snatching the cap from his sister's head, and putting it on his own; "I wish for a rocking-horse."

"Now for me," said Edward; "give

me the cap. I wish for a coachman's whip. Now, Louisa, it is your turn."

"I wish for a wax doll, with flaxen hair, and blue eyes," said Louisa.

"Now you have all had your turns," said the lady, "but Charles: come, Louisa, give the cap to Charles."

"There, take it," cried Louisa, throwing the cap at him, "and make haste."

The cap fell at Charles's feet: he took it up, and laid it on the table.

"Put it on your head, you foolish

boy," said James, "and wish a wish."

Charles smiled, but he did not offer to take up the cap.

"What are you about?" said James, giving him a push; "put on the cap, and tell us your wish."

"Charles," said the lady, "don't you understand what you are to do? Put on the cap, and don't be stupid."

"I thank you, Ma'am," answered Charles; "but I beg that you will not be angry, if I don't put on the wishing-cap."

"But you shall have it on," said James, taking it off the table, and putting it on his head.

Charles took it quietly off his head, and laid it on the table.

The lady looked surprised; and drawing Charles to her, she said,

"What is the meaning of your behaviour? Why will you not play with us?"

"Perhaps you may not be pleased, if I tell you, Ma'am; and I do not wish to make you angry," answered little Charles.

"But I will know," said the lady, looking vexed.

"My poor papa, when he was alive," said Charles, "used to tell me that I ought not to wish for any thing but God's blessing: and he taught me this verse—*Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be*

added unto you: (Matt. vi. 33.) and this is the reason why I do not like to put on the wishing-cap."

While little Charles was speaking, the rest of the children stood staring and laughing; and when he had done, the lady pushed him away, saying, "You are a strange, foolish boy, and not fit to play with other children. Go to bed immediately."

Charles went up to his room. His cheeks were wet with tears, and his heart was very sad. He remembered, that he once had a papa to lean his head against when he was unhappy, and a dear mamma to wipe away his tears; but they were both dead: yet still

he had a Saviour to whom he might freely go. So he tried to lift up his heart to this dear Saviour, and laying his little head on his pillow, he fell asleep. In his sleep he had a very sweet dream about heaven: and when he awoke in the morning, he remembered these words in the Prophet Isaiah—*As one whom his mother com-*

forteth, so will I comfort you. (Isaiah lxvi. 13.)

While Charles was dressing himself, he heard a very great noise down stairs. He made haste, and running into the play-room, he found the rest of the children screaming and jumping for joy. Charlotte dressed in a new muslin frock; Louisa with the wax doll she had wished for; James riding on a large new rocking-horse; and Edward with a coachman's whip.

"Look here, Master Charles," said James, "see what the wishing-cap has brought us! Are you not sorry now that you were such a fool as to refuse to put on the wishing-cap?" Then the

rude boy began to shout and halloo, riding up and down as hard as the horse would go; while Edward kept cutting and lashing the heels of the wooden horse with his coachman's whip, whistling, and smacking his lips, like a coachman; Louisa sung to her doll; and Charlotte danced about in her new frock, singing and laughing: and, all together, there was such a noise, that it might have been heard to the end of the street; the boys every now and then crying out, "Well, Master Charles, what do you think of us now?"

Every thing went on very well, and all were in the greatest good-humour, till Edward, without intending it, in-

stead of lashing the wooden legs of the horse, gave his brother a most terrible cut with his long whip, over one knee, and across one hand. James, being made very angry with the pain, jumped from his horse; and flying at his brother, began to beat him with all his strength. Edward ran to his sisters for help; and James followed, continuing to beat him, and saying, "You sha'n't horse-whip me for nothing, Sir, I can tell you that."

At length, James pushed Edward against Louisa; by which means, her doll was thrown down, and broken to pieces: and Edward, as he fell, caught his foot in Charlotte's new frock, and tore it sadly.

Charlotte and Louisa now began to scream and cry in their turns; and there was such a dreadful noise, that the lady came in haste to see what was the matter.

The children were all quiet, as soon as they saw the lady, and very much frightened too. "So," she said, "you have been fighting, you naughty children, instead of enjoying the pretty things I got for you! You, Charlotte, have torn your frock; and you, Louisa, have broken your doll. And as to you, you naughty boys, you have been beating each other: go up to your bed-rooms; and there you shall stay all day, and have nothing but bread and water. As for the rocking-

horse and the whip, I shall send them back to the shop."

So the four children were taken up to their rooms; and the whip and the rocking-horse were sent back to the shop: but little Charles was asked to breakfast with the lady in the parlour. And she said to him, "I begin to think your papa was a wise man, when he taught you to seek for nothing but God's blessing: for I see that having the things we wish for, does not always make us the happier."

Little Charles was much pleased, when he heard the lady speak so kindly; and he asked her to forgive the other children, but she would not.

And now I will tell you how little Charles received at last what he had secretly desired above all things, and how happy it made him.

About two months after this time, all the children were taken ill with a fever which was then going about London. They all recovered, how-

ever, but little Charles; for though the lady took great care of him, because she now began to love him, and though a very skilful doctor came often to see him, yet he got worse and worse. For many days he could not speak, and did not know any body.

At last, the time of his death drew very near. He had been asleep; and opened his eyes, while the lady was standing by his bed. He looked quite cheerful; and holding out his hand to her, "I am going to die, Ma'am," he said, "I feel death approaching; but I am very happy. That dear Saviour whose love my father taught me to seek, is very near me, though

my eyes do not now see him. He comforts me with his promises, and tells me that for his sake death shall be made easy to me.

"It was because I desired his love alone, that I ceased to wish for other things. I knew that they could not make me happy. All the world,

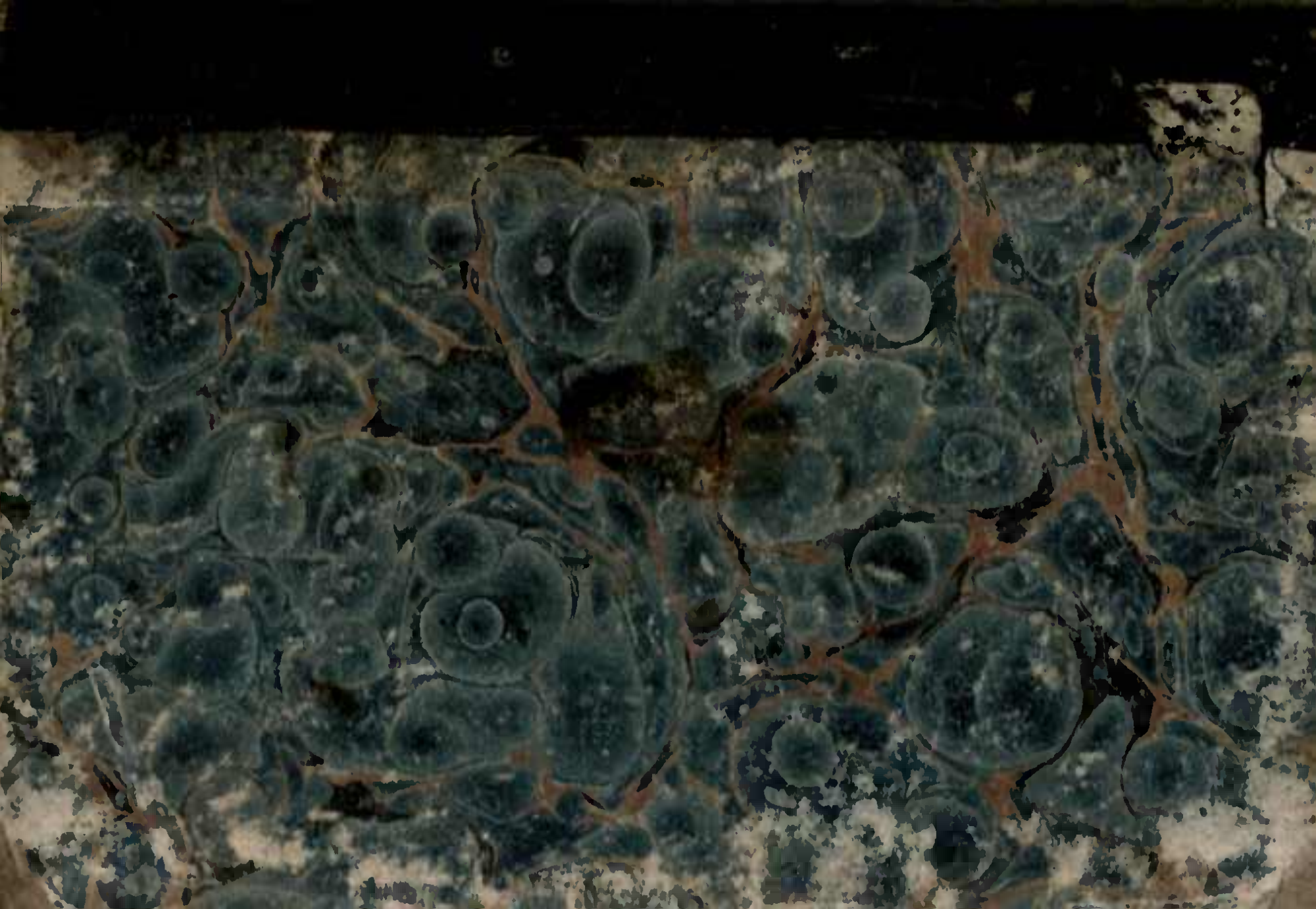
my papa taught me, could not make me happy without my Saviour's love. And now I am going to this dear Saviour; and I know that he will forgive my sins, because he gave me grace to seek him."

Then little Charles prayed that God would bless the lady, and the other children under her care: and soon afterwards he died.

I am happy to tell you, that the lady never forgot little Charles's words upon his dying bed. From that time, she gave her heart to seek heavenly blessings instead of earthly possessions: and she used often to say to the other children, when they were

wishing for toys, or other foolish things, "Remember little Charles; and, like him, put away the wishing-cap."

And so I say to you, my dear little children, who may hereafter read this story,—

DON'T PUT ON THE WISHING-CAP.

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